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IN the involvement of the

Middle Eastern situation

at the present moment a se-

parate set of tensions is re-

presented by

MID-EAST

PICKINGS

was actively hostile to the

creation of the Baghdad Pact

and it required a good deal

of pressure on the part of the

other Western powers to silence

open French criticism at

first. Basically, French op-

position to the pact stems

from the belief that, on the

one hand, the pact involves

alignments which are unac-

ceptable to some members of

the Arab bloc and therefore

add to the existing pressures,

and, on the other, that the

entire Northern Tier scheme

meant asking for trouble in

the form of Soviet retaliation,

more particularly from the

moment at which Persia joined

the group. At the same

time, rumour has escaped

the Quai d'Orsay to the effect

that as an alternative to keep-

ing Persia in the Baghdad

Pact, the British and Soviet

Foreign Ministers have al-

ready privately agreed to a

new division of Russia's

neighbouring spheres of in-

fluence for their respective

countries; but this may be no

more than an attempt to shake

Persia's morale.

It is clear, of course, that

France has much to lose in

the Middle East should

the Baghdad Pact become an

effective instrument of power

BRITISH LABOUR RALLIES AGAINST EDEN ON ME.

By GEORGE LICHTHEIM

LONDON.

THERE has been a fresh de-

velopment in the Middle

Eastern tangle which should

be of interest to connoisseurs

of the political game as played in a de-

mocracy: the Prime Minister's

Guided speech is becoming a

party issue. This was to be ex-

pected from the moment his re-

marks touched off a storm in

Israel, and the only remarkable

feature of the affair is that it

took the Opposition a fortnight

to seize its opportunity. But then

slowly on its feet.

However, the period of hesita-

tion appears to be over now.

The exchanges between Sir An-

thony Eden and the Opposition

leaders in the Commons on No-

vember 24 were indicative of a

new temper — as was the loyal

rallying of the Conservatives to

Sir Anthony's side when the

Opposition pressed him a little

too closely. This is what always

happens on such occasions, and

Labour's entry into the fray

may not be an unmitigated blessing

for Israel if it leads to the stif-

ling of intelligent Tory criticism

of Sir Anthony. But at least the

Summerhall school of thought

will now have to suppress its

yearning to outbid the Tories

in the eyes of the Arab League.

On balance, there is probably

some gain in this revival of clear

party alignments.

"Plain Man" On TV

The television men to

watch during the past fortnight

has been Mr. Alfred Robens.

When he first attacked the is-

sues on television a fortnight ago,

he bumbled forthrightly in the

"I'm a plain man" fashion suit-

able to a leading trade unionist

turned politician. Since then, he

has been more successful in the

House—November 22 and 24—he

was not impressed by Sir An-

thony Eden's slipperiness. In fact, he

managed to get under his skin to

such effect that Sir Anthony on

both occasions lost his temper.

(He did so again when challenged

to state clearly what Israel "con-

sideration is true, or almost true,

of the Labour Party's formal avow-

al of its desire for an Anglo-

Israeli defence pact. Yet the fact

that almost the entire leadership

of the National Labour Execu-

tive — including Mr. Morrison

and Dr. Summerhall — is to call

on Mr. Macmillan, in order to

prevent the base for a defence

pact with Israel, does suggest

a certain hardening of party at-

titudes.

It can of course be argued that

for the Labour Party to identify

itself so openly with Israel is

the surest way of antagonizing

both the Government and its

supporters; but there is reason

to believe that Mr. Atkin and

his colleagues do not see the

situation in this light. They ap-

pear genuinely convinced that

the Government can be pressed

into doing what, on their

reading of the national interest,

is the right thing. This of course

involves a plain admission of

the fact that what the Opposi-

tion conceives to be the pursuit

of the national interest may re-

quire a purge at the Foreign

Office; and Mr. Macmillan is the

last man for such an operation.

One may also recall that Labour

went through similar lessons 10

years ago, at the time of the

Spanish and Spanish lessons, and

in the end achieved precisely nothing.

On the other hand, Mr. Atkin

is less strongly entrenched

party-wise than Sir Anthony, and

there are supporters of Sir An-

thony who are of the Spanish Re-

publican school, or of the Spanish

Republican school, or of the Span-

ish Republican school, or of the

Spanish Republican school, or of

the Spanish Republican school, or

of the Spanish Republican school,

or of the Spanish Republican

school, or of the Spanish Repu-

blican school, or of the Spanish

Republican school, or of the

Spanish Republican school, or

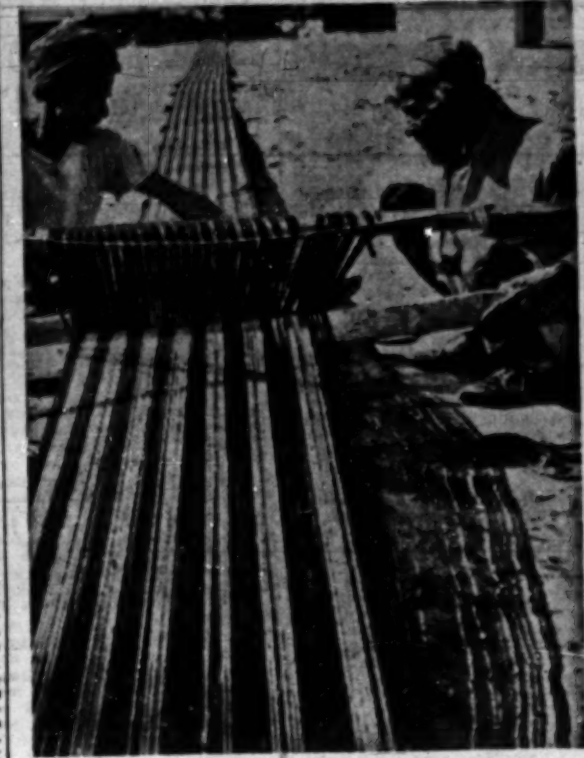
of the Spanish Republican

school, or of the Spanish Repu-

blican school, or of the Spanish

Republican school, or of the

Spanish Republican school, or



Yemenite weavers operating their simple loom in the yard of their house near Rishon.

Maskit Draws Style from People and Places

By LEA BEN-DOR

ON the first Saturday morning

after its opening, between

warm rains, floods and threats

of an impending new economic

crisis, close on 800 people crowd-

ed into the cramped downstairs

rooms of the Tel Aviv Museum

to see the village craft exhibi-

tion arranged there by Maskit.

Part of this growing popular

interest may be ascribed to the

fact that the exhibition has

"working models" — carpets, ba-

ret work, handwoven materials.

But that is only the first glance.

Look a little closer, and you see

that something like a harmoni-

ous style has emerged from the

necessity to adjust traditional

skills to a modern market.

The silverware is less heavy, and

has more attention to detail. The

embroidery is applied

lightly and incorporated into the

design of the garment. Bright

terms are used, but they are

not out of place. They are

ready to step into its shoes.

At the Cinema

"The Prodigal" (Ethere) is a

film in the pseudo-biblical

tradition of Hollywood with a

big cast and a lot of unrelated

action. Lana Turner has her

usual glen-like role and Ed-

ward Gurney is a bit of a

very energetic. Michael, son

of the prophet Eli, while Louis

Calhern was sufficiently sinister

as a prophet of doom. The au-

dience, however, seems to be

very much to its taste. S.W.

ions and sofa regs. This project,

originally intended to do no

more than find part-time em-

ployment for people in the vil-

lages, has in fact done what Is-

rael's regular fashion industry

never achieved — it has struck

an entirely convincing Israeli

note, unmistakable and all-per-

vasive.

It is realized most strongly,

perhaps, in the first attempts by

Maskit's fashion designer, Mrs.

Finy Letterman, to use the ma-

terials made by the villages

for export. A sand-coloured

loose coat, made of the unbleach-

ed wool of sheep that must have

been taken on protective colouring

in the House of Commons. It

has a simplicity of cut and

material and obvious

utility that would make it a

piece of place in a jeep in Beer-

sheva, and would give it distinc-

tion on Fifth Avenue. Yet it

clearly belongs with the elabor-

ate — and expensive — cre-

ations of similar material, but

with a gold thread woven into

it, and a hood decorated with

silver beads, and heavy purple

lining for glamour. It turns up

again as a child's duffle coat.

No Need for Labels

Again, the striking pinks and

purples of Kurdistan woolen

clothing, made of the same

bags and shoes. There is a bag

of natural colour handwoven

wool, fastened by an inconspic-

uous strip of metal-work

that will double as a bracelet. It

does not need a label to tell

it is made in Israel, and it will

no longer need goodwill to be

Go-Getters and Controls in Israel

By SYDNEY GAMFELL

ONE is frequently asked in Is-

rael about currency controls

on foreign exchange and inter-

nal credit. The answer can be

quite simple. If you think that

these or any other controls do

not suit you, then create the

conditions in which you can get

rid of them. The first thing

would be to get rid of them be-